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In this concise form, the present edition is certainly the best that has yet appeared. It is methodical. It takes as its starting-point no mere hypothesis like that of Merkel. Yet after all, it is little more than the edition of Pardessus in a concentrated form and in fewer pages. As such, it is more convenient and more manageable for scholars; and it contains some valuable corrections. But science is still far from having said its last word on the subject of this law, so interesting and so important as containing the germ of Germanic institutions. We notice with pleasure the remark of Professor Behrend, that he proposes later to attempt to establish the genealogical connection of these texts. It is certainly true that the history of this celebrated text has not yet been written, but at least, by this preliminary work, Professor Behrend may perhaps diminish a little the difficulty of the scientific problem.

Mr. Boretius, who edits the Capitularies to the *Lex Salica*, has recently published a work entitled *Beiträge zur Capitularienkritik*. These two works naturally belong together, and at some future time it may be well to call attention to them.

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14. — *The Legend of Jubal, and other Poems*. By GEORGE ELIOT. William Blackwood and Sons: Edinburgh and London. 1874.

WHEN the author of "Middlemarch" published, some years since, her first volume of verse, the reader, in trying to judge it fairly, asked himself what he should think of it if she had never published a line of prose. The question, perhaps, was not altogether a help to strict fairness of judgment, but the author was protected from illiberal conclusions by the fact that, practically, it was impossible to answer it. George Eliot belongs to that class of pre-eminent writers in relation to whom the imagination comes to self-consciousness only to find itself in subjection. It was impossible to disengage one's judgment from the permanent influence of "Adam Bede" and its companions, and it was necessary, from the moment that the author undertook to play the poet's part, to feel that her genius was all of one piece. People have often asked themselves how they would estimate Shakespeare if they knew him only by his comedies, Homer if his name stood only for the "Odyssey," and Milton if he had written nothing but "Lycidas" and the shorter pieces. The question, of necessity, inevitable though it is, leads to nothing. George Eliot is neither Homer nor Shakespeare nor Milton; but her work, like theirs, is a massive achievement, divided into a supremely good and a less good, and it provokes

us, like theirs, to the fruitless attempt to estimate the latter portion on its own merits alone. The little volume before us gives us another opportunity; but here, as before, we find ourselves uncomfortably divided between the fear, on the one hand, of being bribed into favor, and, on the other, of giving short measure of it. The author's verses are a narrow manifestation of her genius, but they are an unmistakable manifestation. "*Middlemarch*" has made us demand even finer things of her than we did before, and whether, as patented readers of "*Middlemarch*," we like "*Jubal*" and its companions the less or the more, we must admit that they are characteristic products of the same intellect. We imagine George Eliot is quite philosopher enough, having produced her poems mainly as a kind of experimental entertainment for her own mind, to let them commend themselves to the public on any grounds whatever which will help to illustrate the workings of versatile intelligence, — as interesting failures, if nothing better. She must feel they are interesting; an exaggerated modesty cannot deny that.

We have found them extremely so. They consist of a rhymed narrative, of some length, of the career of Jubal, the legendary inventor of the lyre; of a short rustic idyl in blank verse on a theme gathered in the Black Forest of Baden; of a tale, versified in rhyme, from Boccaccio; and of a series of dramatic scenes called "*Armgarth*," — the best thing, to our sense, of the four. To these are added a few shorter pieces, chiefly in blank verse, each of which seems to us proportionately more successful than the more ambitious ones. Our author's verse is a mixture of spontaneity of thought and excessive reflectiveness of expression, and its value is generally more in the idea than in the form. In whatever George Eliot writes, you have the comfortable certainty, infrequent in other quarters, of finding an idea, and you get the substance of her thought in the short poems, without the somewhat rigid envelope of her poetic diction. If we may say, broadly, that the supreme merit of a poem is in having warmth, and that it is less and less valuable in proportion as it cools by too long waiting upon either fastidious skill or inefficient skill, the little group of verses entitled "*Brother and Sister*" deserve our preference. They have extreme loveliness, and the feeling they so abundantly express is of a much less intellectualized sort than that which prevails in the other poems. It is seldom that one of our author's compositions concludes upon so simply sentimental a note as the last lines of "*Brother and Sister*": —

"But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there!"

This will be interesting to many readers as proceeding more directly from the writer's personal experience than anything else they remember. George Eliot's is a personality so enveloped in the mists of reflection that it is an uncommon sensation to find one's self in immediate contact with it. This charming poem, too, throws a grateful light on some of the best pages the author has written, — those in which she describes her heroine's childish years in "The Mill on the Floss." The finest thing in that admirable novel has always been, to our taste, not its portrayal of the young girl's love-struggles as regards her lover, but those as regards her brother. The former are fiction, — skilful fiction ; but the latter are warm reality, and the merit of the verses we speak of is that they are colored from the same source.

In "Stradivarius," the famous old violin-maker affirms in very pregnant phrase the supreme duty of being perfect in one's labor, and lays down the dictum, which should be the first article in every artist's faith : —

"Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio."

This is the only really inspiring working-creed, and our author's utterance of it justifies her claim to having the distinctively artistic mind, more forcibly than her not infrequent shortcomings in the direction of an artistic *ensemble*. Many persons will probably pronounce "A Minor Prophet" the gem of this little collection, and it is certainly interesting, for a great many reasons. It may seem to characterize the author on a number of sides. It illustrates vividly, in the extraordinary ingenuity and flexibility of its diction, her extreme provocation to indulge in the verbal license of verse. It reads almost like a close imitation of Browning, the great master of the poetical grotesque, except that it observes a discretion which the poet of Red-Cotton Nightcaps long ago threw overboard. When one can say neat things with such rhythmic felicity, why not attempt it, even if one has at one's command the magnificent vehicle of the style of "Middlemarch"? The poem is a kindly satire upon the views and the person of an American vegetarian, a certain Elias Baptist Butterworth, — a gentleman, presumably, who under another name, as an evening caller, has not a little retarded the flight of time for the author. Mr. Browning has written nothing better than the account of the Butterworthian "Thought Atmosphere" : —

“ And when all earth is vegetarian,
When, lacking butchers, quadrupeds die out,
And less Thought-atmosphere is reabsorbed
By nerves of insects parasitical,
Those higher truths, seized now by higher minds,
But not expressed (the insects hindering),
Will either flash out into eloquence,
Or, better still, be comprehensible,
By rappings simply, without need of roots.”

The author proceeds to give a sketch of the beatific state of things under the vegetarian *régime* prophesied by her friend in

“ Mildly nasal tones
And vowels stretched to suit the widest views.”

How, for instance,

“ Sahara will be populous
With families of gentlemen retired
From commerce in more Central Africa,
Who order coolness as we order coal,
And have a lobe anterior strong enough
To think away the sand-storms.”

Or how, as water is probably a non-conductor of the Thought-atmosphere,

“ Fishes may lead carnivorous lives obscure,
But must not dream of culinary rank
Or being dished in good society.”

Then follows the author's own melancholy head-shake and her reflections on the theme that there can be no easy millennium, and that

“ Bitterly
I feel that every change upon this earth
Is bought with sacrifice ”;

and that, even if Mr. Butterworth's axioms were not too good to be true, one might deprecate them in the interest of that happiness which is associated with error that is deeply familiar. Human improvement, she concludes, is something both larger and smaller than the vegetarian bliss, and consists less in a realized perfection than in the sublime dissatisfaction of generous souls with the shortcomings of the actual. All this is unfolded in verse which, if without the absolute pulse of spontaneity, has at least something that closely resembles it. It has very fine passages.

Very fine, too, both in passages and as a whole, is “The Legend of Jubal.” It is noteworthy, by the way, that three of these poems are

on themes connected with music; and yet we remember no representation of a musician among the multitudinous figures which people the author's novels. But George Eliot, we take it, has the musical sense in no small degree, and the origin of melody and harmony is here described in some very picturesque and sustained poetry. Jubal invents the lyre and teaches his companions and his tribe how to use it, and then goes forth to wander in quest of new musical inspiration. In this pursuit he grows patriarchally old, and at last makes his way back to his own people. He finds them, greatly advanced in civilization, celebrating what we should call nowadays his centennial, and making his name the refrain of their songs. He goes in among them and declares himself, but they receive him as a lunatic, and buffet him, and thrust him out into the wilderness again, where he succumbs to their unconscious ingratitude.

"The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
While Jubal, lonely, laid him down to die."

In his last hour he has a kind of metaphysical vision which consoles him, and enables him to die contented. A mystic voice assures him that he has no cause for complaint; that his use to mankind was everything, and his credit and glory nothing; that being rich in his genius, it was his part to give, gratuitously, to unendowed humanity; and that the knowledge of his having become a part of man's joy, and an image in man's soul, should reconcile him to the prospect of lying senseless in the tomb. Jubal assents, and expires

"A quenched sun-wave,
The all-creating Presence for his grave."

This is very noble and heroic doctrine, and is enforced in verse not unworthy of it for having a certain air of strain and effort; for surely it is not doctrine that the egoistic heart rises to without some experimental flutter of the wings. It is the expression of a pessimistic philosophy which pivots upon itself only in the face of a really formidable ultimatum. We cordially accept it, however, and are tolerably confident that the artist in general, in his death-throes, will find less repose in the idea of a heavenly compensation for earthly neglect than in the certainty that humanity is really assimilating his productions.

"Agatha" is slighter in sentiment than its companions, and has the vague aroma of an idea rather than the positive weight of thought. It is very graceful. "How Lisa loved the King" seems to us to have, more than its companions, the easy flow and abundance of prime poetry; it wears a reflection of the incomparable naturalness of its model in the Decameron. "Armgar" we have found extremely interesting,

although perhaps it offers plainest proof of what the author sacrifices in renouncing prose. The drama, in prose, would have been vividly dramatic, while, as it stands, we have merely a situation contemplated, rather than unfolded, in a dramatic light. A great singer loses her voice, and a patronizing nobleman, who, before the calamity, had wished her to become his wife, retire from the stage, and employ her genius for the beguilement of private life, finds that he has urgent business in another neighborhood, and that he has not the mission to espouse her misfortune. Armgart rails tremendously at fate, often in very striking phrase. The Count, of course, in bidding her farewell, has hoped that time will soften her disappointment : —

“That empty cup so neatly ciphered, ‘Time,’
Handed me as a cordial for despair.
Time — what a word to fling in charity !
Bland, neutral word for slow dull-beating pain, —
Days, months, and years !”

We must refer the reader to the poem itself for knowledge how resignation comes to so bitter a pain as the mutilation of conscious genius. It comes to Armgart because she is a very superior girl ; and though her outline, here, is at once rather sketchy and rather rigid, she may be added to that group of magnificently generous women, — the Dinahs, the Maggies, the Romolas, the Dorotheas, — the representation of whom is our author's chief title to our gratitude. But in spite of Armgart's resignation, the moral atmosphere of the poem, like that of most of the others and like that of most of George Eliot's writings, is an almost gratuitously sad one. It would take more space than we can command to say how it is that at this and at other points our author strikes us as a spirit mysteriously perverted from her natural temper. We have a feeling that, both intellectually and morally, her genius is essentially of a simpler order than most of her recent manifestations of it. Intellectually, it has run to epigram and polished cleverness, and morally to a sort of conscious and ambitious scepticism, with which it only half commingles. The interesting thing would be to trace the moral divergence from the characteristic type. At bottom, according to this notion, the author of “Romola” and “Middlemarch” has an ardent desire and faculty for positive, active, constructive belief of the old-fashioned kind, but she has fallen upon a critical age and felt its contagion and dominion. If, with her magnificent gifts, she had been borne by the mighty general current in the direction of passionate faith, we often think that she would have achieved something incalculably great.